

2 New Russian Missiles Discounted at Pentagon

11/9/65
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Two of the new Soviet missiles displayed in a Moscow parade Sunday, neither of which is in the American arsenal nor under development, elicited interest but no concern from Pentagon experts yesterday.

One was an "orbital missile" that has been shown before but with less explicit and extravagant claims. The other was what was called an "intercontinental" missile on a compact and highly maneuverable mount.

American officials withheld comment on the arms show pending the receipt and careful study of U.S. military attaches' reports and other intelligence data. Pentagon experts, however, were inclined to discount the value of such weapons in comparison with U.S. strategic missiles.

Advantage Offset

The great advantage of a mobile missile is its near invulnerability to missile attack, but this asset is outweighed in terms of accuracy and cost. Ballistic missiles must be fired from one exactly known position on earth to another.

Twice the United States has started development of a mobile long-range land-based missile and later dropped both of them. The railroad-carried 5000-mile Minuteman

proved to much less accurate than the fixed Minuteman in hardened silos. Also it would have cost twice as much and would have involved problems in moving around the country.

Development of a 2000-mile mobile medium-range ballistic missile (MMRBM), to be carried on trucks or barges in Western Europe, was started for NATO. It would have been more accurate than the mobile Minuteman, but NATO powers showed little interest in financing it, and it also was dropped.

Satisfied With Setup

Pentagon leaders feel the mixture of Minuteman ICBMs in underground launchers and Polaris submarines adequately fills American needs. The Polaris is both hidden and mobile, and is big enough to carry the computers and other gear necessary to fix its position and provide necessary accuracy.

Acceptable accuracy can be achieved in shorter-range

missiles which are fired at a lower trajectory and do not have reentry problems. Mobile medium-range Soviet missiles will present NATO with greater problems than fixed rockets and are of some concern to the Pentagon.

Some doubt is voiced as to whether the new Soviet missile has intercontinental range, as claimed.

Explicit Claims Made

Soviet leaders have boasted of orbital rockets before. Sunday they were more explicit than earlier in their claims, declaring that they can put warheads into orbit and bring them down on signal from the ground on the "first or any other orbit of the earth."

But achieving accuracy in the bringing a warhead down from orbit is a very difficult thing, as shown in the landing of satellites. U.S. Geminis have had trouble coming down close to waiting ships and the lost manned Vostok landed far off course.

Pentagon officials consider that it is far more accurate and effective and much cheaper to maintain a deterrence system of ground ICBM and Polaris missiles.